

**BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
SMEETH PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a joint meeting of the Parish Councils
Held at 7.00pm on Thursday 4th August 2016
At Brabourne Baptist Church**

1. Present

Cllr Herrick (Chairman, Smeeth Parish Council), Cllr Thorpe (Vice-chairman), Cllr Mrs Morey, Cllr Mrs Pereboom and Cllr McPhee.

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman, Brabourne Parish Council) Cllr Mrs Young, Cllr Mrs Bewick and Cllr Spokes.
Mrs Wood (Clerk). Mr Brian Sanders was present.

Cllr Herrick took the Chair.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Tanner and Cllr Mayland (Brabourne Parish Council - prior commitments).

3. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Spokes, Voluntary Declaration as a member of the Playing Field Steering Group.

4. Resolution to exclude the public

Resolved:

That under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be dealt with, the Public and Press leave the meeting during discussion of item 5, namely Local Plan to 2030 – Parish Councils’ response to site submissions

5. Local Plan to 2030 – Parish Councils’ response to site submissions

The Chairman advised that there are 2 sites in Smeeth parish proposed for inclusion in the Local Plan, and asked if the Councils wished to comment, and if so should this be jointly or as individual parishes.

The meeting was suspended to allow Mr Sanders to address the Council.

Mr Sanders stated that he is Secretary of the Playing Field Association (PFA), which is chaired by Paul Dawson. A Steering Group had been set up to oversee the improvements to the playing field, which he chaired. He noted that while the improvements’ programme had been football-led the playing field was a community facility. The possibility of acquiring an additional 5-6 acres to enlarge the playing field and enhance facilities had been explored, but negotiations were protracted and eventually stalled.

Mr Sanders stated that the Football Club wanted to return to the village and therefore work was needed to improve the existing playing field; funding of £80,000 for the work was obtained and the funders made aware of the earlier discussions.

During the work a new approach was made to the PFA by agents for the landowner regarding enhancing the site with concomitant residential development. The agents had been in discussions with ABC regarding the proposal, and consultants had prepared 2 options:

Option A: Residential development on the playing field, the PFA would lease the adjoining area to the south and money would be forthcoming to fund a MUGA, additional football pitches, car parking etc.

Option B: Retain the existing playing field, provide additional facilities and put in residential development to the south.

Mr Sanders stated that the proposed housing in Option A would be a logical continuation of housing on The Ridgeway.

Cllr Mrs Morey asked if a lease would be granted for the land in Option B, noting that the playing field was a Deed of Gift. Mr Sanders replied that the terms and conditions of the playing field Deed of Gift were almost identical to those in the lease held by the village hall (which was for 999 years, the same as that for the playing field).

Cllr Mrs Morey asked if the additional land would be on a lease or a Deed of Gift. Mr Sanders replied that this was unknown, but he would assume that it would be an extension of the Deed of Gift; Cllr Spokes suggested that it may be a new Deed on another 999-year lease. Mr Sanders advised that no ground rent would be payable on the additional land, the existing land was subject to a peppercorn rent.

Concerns were expressed by Cllr Mrs Morey that the football club would not have access to the playing field during any development works; these were acknowledged by Mr Sanders.

Mr Sanders advised that the proposal would be submitted to ABC before the close of consultation on the draft Local Plan. He further advised that the Steering Group would ask for a condition on Option A that a replacement pitch be provided to the same standard of the existing before work was started to give continuity of use.

Cllr Spokes stated that agreement was being sought that the money already invested in the existing pitch [£80,000] would be spent on the new pitch. Additional facilities would be provided via S106 money or fundraising.

In answer to a question from Cllr Mrs Morey, Mr Sanders advised that the play area would not be moved and would continue in use.

Cllr Mrs Morey queried access to the site, Mr Sanders replied that the proposals were outline only and Highways would be consulted.

In answer to a question from Cllr Mrs Pereboom, Mr Sanders replied that although the residential development area was larger in Option B than Option A, the number of properties would remain at 20-25.

Cllr Mrs Morey noted discrepancies in the 2 options with regard to the area of the play park and car park, she also felt that there should be more parking spaces provided; Cllr Spokes agreed, stating that additional parking might alleviate parking problems at Smeeth School at drop-off times. Mr Sanders replied that the layouts were indicative only, and both parties were keen to work to benefit the community.

Cllr Hickmott asked for clarification on the submission to ABC, Mr Sanders replied that the proposal would be submitted for inclusion in the Local Plan to 2030. If it was included, Cllr Hickmott asked if an early outline planning application with reserved matters would be submitted, Mr Sanders replied that it would.

Cllr Hickmott urged that if Option A went ahead, the developer should be pressed to put in the pitch without delay; Cllr Spokes agreed, because there would otherwise be the risk that momentum and interest would be lost.

Mr Sanders stated that a number of funders (including the Shepway Sports Trust) had expressed an interest in helping improve the facility, with the aim of delivering a sports hub for the rural areas for Ashford and nearby communities in Shepway. He noted that this had the support of ABC and there was good support from the community.

The meeting was reconvened.

The Chairman asked if the PCs supported the proposal; Cllr Spokes recommended that the PCs comment individually, there would thus be 2 comments.

The Chairman asked Smeeth Parish Councillors for their preferred option. The Vice-chairman and Cllr Mrs Pereboom replied that Option A was preferred; Cllr Mrs Pereboom queried the impact on traffic given the inclusion in the draft Local Plan of a site in Church Road, directly opposite the playing field.

Cllr Macphee stated that his preference was for Option A, but there must be an assurance that the new pitch was put in before the existing was lost to ensure continuity; Cllr Mrs Morey agreed.

Church Road site submission: The Chairman asked if the PC supported the submission, noting that it would provide a number of affordable homes for the area. He further noted that the site had previously been considered by the PCs in their search for sites for Local Needs Housing (LNH) but disregarded by Planning. The submission proposed 30 homes on 1 hectare, and would therefore be low density, this was welcomed by Cllr Hickmott. It was noted that 40% of these would be affordable (not LNH). Cllr Spokes asked if this could be changed, the Clerk replied that this was government legislation, but the PC could ask that such a condition be attached. Cllr MacPhee felt that the playing field development may be more amenable to such a proposal, because of the community benefit that would accrue.

The Clerk advised that any comments on the proposals had to be submitted by the close of consultation (5pm on 10th August 2016), comments submitted after the close may not be taken into account. All comments would be considered and the draft plan revised, this would then be submitted to the Secretary of State and reviewed for soundness by the Planning Inspectorate in 2017.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom reiterated her concerns with regard to the access on to Church Road of both proposals, and said that a traffic management scheme was needed; Cllr Mrs Morey agreed and stated that improvements to the highway to remove pinchpoints were needed. Cllr Mrs Pereboom felt that these were unlikely, citing the comment in the Plan of retention of existing hedgerows.

Cllr Spokes felt that this submission would be complemented by Option B, the latter would also address the access issues on to Church Road.

Cllr MacPhee countered that the Church Road submission was infill and within the village confines, which was not the case for Option B. Cllr Spokes stressed the need for both schemes to work together to benefit the community.

Mr Sanders advised that the 2 schemes would deliver 55 homes, meeting the identified need for 55 homes; the Clerk replied that this was the need for LNH, not market housing.

The Chairman proposed that both proposals be supported because they would deliver a significant quantity of affordable housing, but with the recommendation that some of the housing was designated as LNH. Cllr Mrs Pereboom agreed, noting that traffic management was also needed and that the football pitch should be put in to ensure continuity of use.

The Chairman acknowledged that there would be concerns at the possible developments. Cllr Mrs Pereboom stated that her preference was for the playing field proposal because the enhanced facilities would be a community benefit. She suggested that were both developments to go ahead it would be overdevelopment of the Church Road area. The Chairman and Cllr Spokes agreed.

Cllr Mrs Pereboom asked if there would be any implications for Scout HQ and was advised that there would be none: Scout HQ was sited on its own land and good relations were enjoyed with the football club. Mr Sanders advised that the Scouts had been kept informed of the proposals.

The Chairman proposed that Smeeth Parish Council submitted comments that the playing field submission was supported because of the community benefits and Option A is preferred. There were concerns with regard to S38 (the Church Road site) because of likely traffic impact.

This was agreed.

Brabourne Parish Council agreed with Smeeth Parish Council's comments.

The Clerk was asked to prepare draft submissions for both Parish Councils.

The Chairman further proposed that a comment be submitted that the Village Protection Policy be included in the Local Plan. The Clerk advised that the Policy had been submitted but not taken forward. It was agreed that the Parish Councils would ask that the Policy be included in the Local Plan.

6. Correspondence

Modification to the Definitive Map: public path diversion of part of HE307. Smeeth Parish Council had no objections to the modification.

7. Any other business

No other business was raised.

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.